

March 16, 2016

Andrew M. Fleischmann
Co-Chair – Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3100
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Representative Fleischmann:

I am writing regarding Raised Bill No. 378, The Recommendations of the High School Graduation Requirements Task Force. I request that you not support this proposal to eliminate the .5 Health and Safety Education graduation credit.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed in December, 2015, deemed Health and Physical Education a part of all student's well-rounded education. Also, the Affordable Care Act has a strong focus on preventative services. Health Education offers students strategies to self-advocate and make healthy choices as they grown into adulthood. A comprehensive, quality Health Education program:

- ✓ is a standards/outcomes-based program that provides students with a rich learning environment to acquire important health concepts and skills;
- ✓ is focused on developing health literacy as opposed to exposing students to information in a broad, non-specific manner;
- ✓ effectively infuses 21st century skills (critical thinking, problem solving and decision making, communication and collaboration, social responsibility, leadership and citizenship, application of technology);
- ✓ prepares students to be college and/or career ready;
- ✓ provides foundational skills and knowledge that promote healthy living, and
- ✓ continues to reinforce critical social and emotional elements that students will use to navigate throughout their lives.

Removal of health education as a graduation requirement will negatively impact on the delivery of quality, comprehensive Health Education across the state of Connecticut. Most importantly, the health and well being of students will be adversely affected. If this bill is passed, many schools systems will not have opportunities to teach all students the necessary prevention strategies that are necessary to decrease high-risk behaviors. In addition, removing the .5 Health and Safety Education credit will cause a potential loss of access to Title IV funds.

Please support keeping the .5 credit for Health and Safety Education as a high school graduation requirement. Thank you for your ongoing support for quality Health Education of all Connecticut's youth.

Sincerely,

Nancy C Tarantino
Physical Education teacher
Eastern Middle School
Riverside, Connecticut